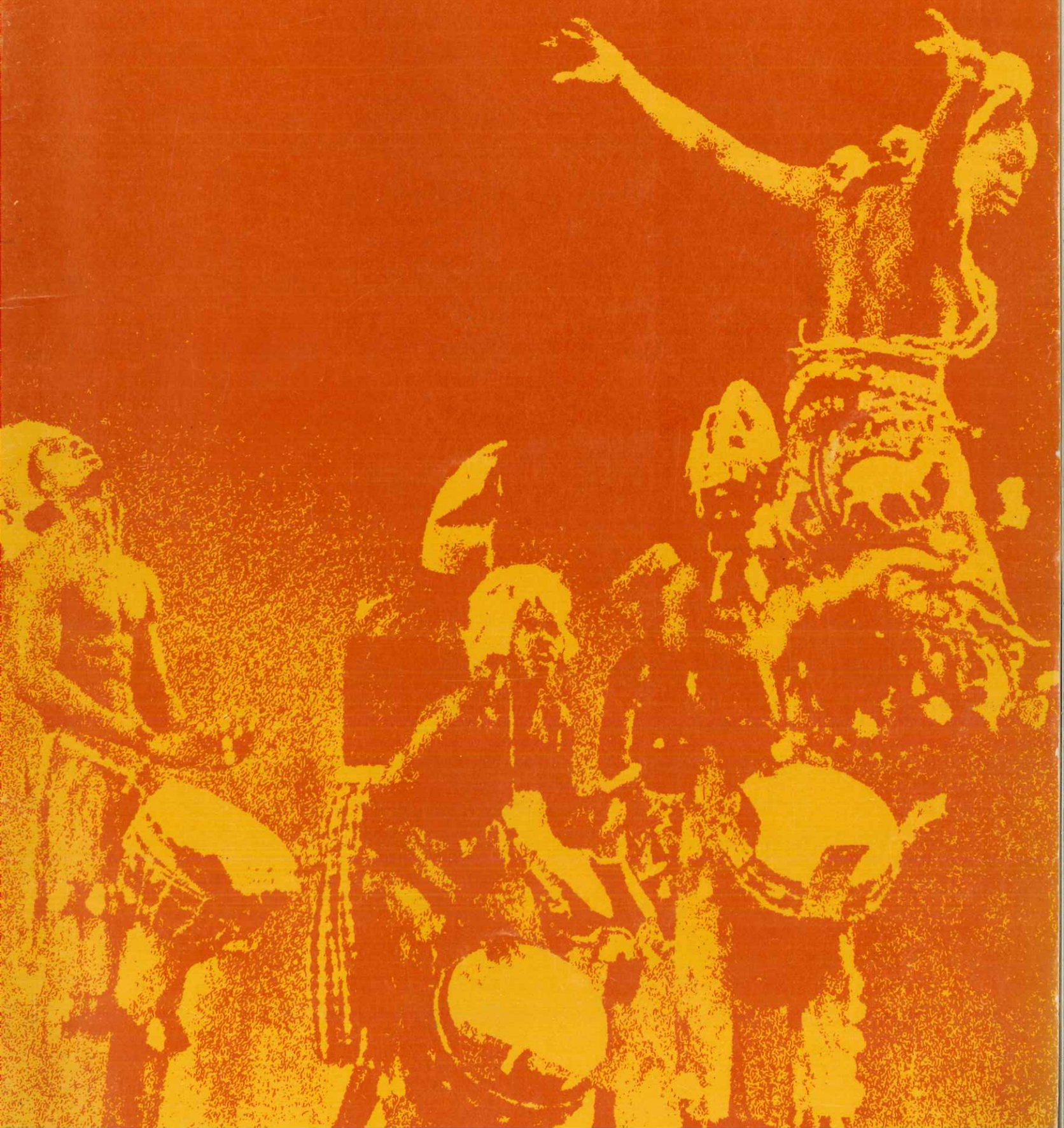
The National Dance Company of Sénégal



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Mel Howard

presents

The National Dance Company of Senegal

(Founded in 1960)

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture
Maurice Sonar Senghor
Director General

Director: Mamadou M'Baye
Administrator: Babacar M'Bengue

Committee Directors:
Abdoulaye Camara, Fanta Toure, Rokhaya N'Doye,
Djimo Kouyate, Modou Fall

The folklore legends were researched and the troupe constituted by
Maurice Sonar Senghor and Mamadou M'Baye

Costumes made in the studios of the Theatre Daniel-Sorano in Dakar
by Line Senghor, assisted by Abdoulaye Camara

Stage Manager: Djimo Kouyate
Tour Manager for Mel Howard: Atlee Stephan III

with

Ibrahima Cisse
Fanta Toure
Fokhaya N'Doye
Mamadou Fall
Octave Sa
Bakary Goudiaby
Samba Diallo
Abass Badji
Joséphine Zambo
Ami Djire
Sokhna Dione
Fatou Ly

Madjiguène Sow
Khady N'Gom
Mariemme N'Gom
Abdoulaye Diakhate
Malick Sylla
Samba Bella Sall
Amara N'Diaye
Nona Badji
Coumba Ba
Mamadou Diallo
Ousmane Seydi
Sékou Kande
M'Baye Niang

Mamadou Diakhate
Djiby Traore
Idrissa Gueye
Madiakhaté M'Boup
Ibrahima Signate
Soulèye Diop
Ousmane Traore
Mamadou Konate
Abdoulaye Diallo
Abdoulaye Thior
Abdoulaye Diack
Abdoulaye Diouf

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The National Dance Company of Sénégal

This is the second tour of North America for the members of the National Dance Company of Sénégal. Their first visit here was in 1971 when they performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, at the J. F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C. and at other theatres throughout the country as part of the first Afro-Asian Festival, produced by Mel Howard and Ninon Tallon Karlweis. Other Companies appearing in that first festival were the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, The National Dance Company of Morocco, and the Ritual Acrobats of Persia.

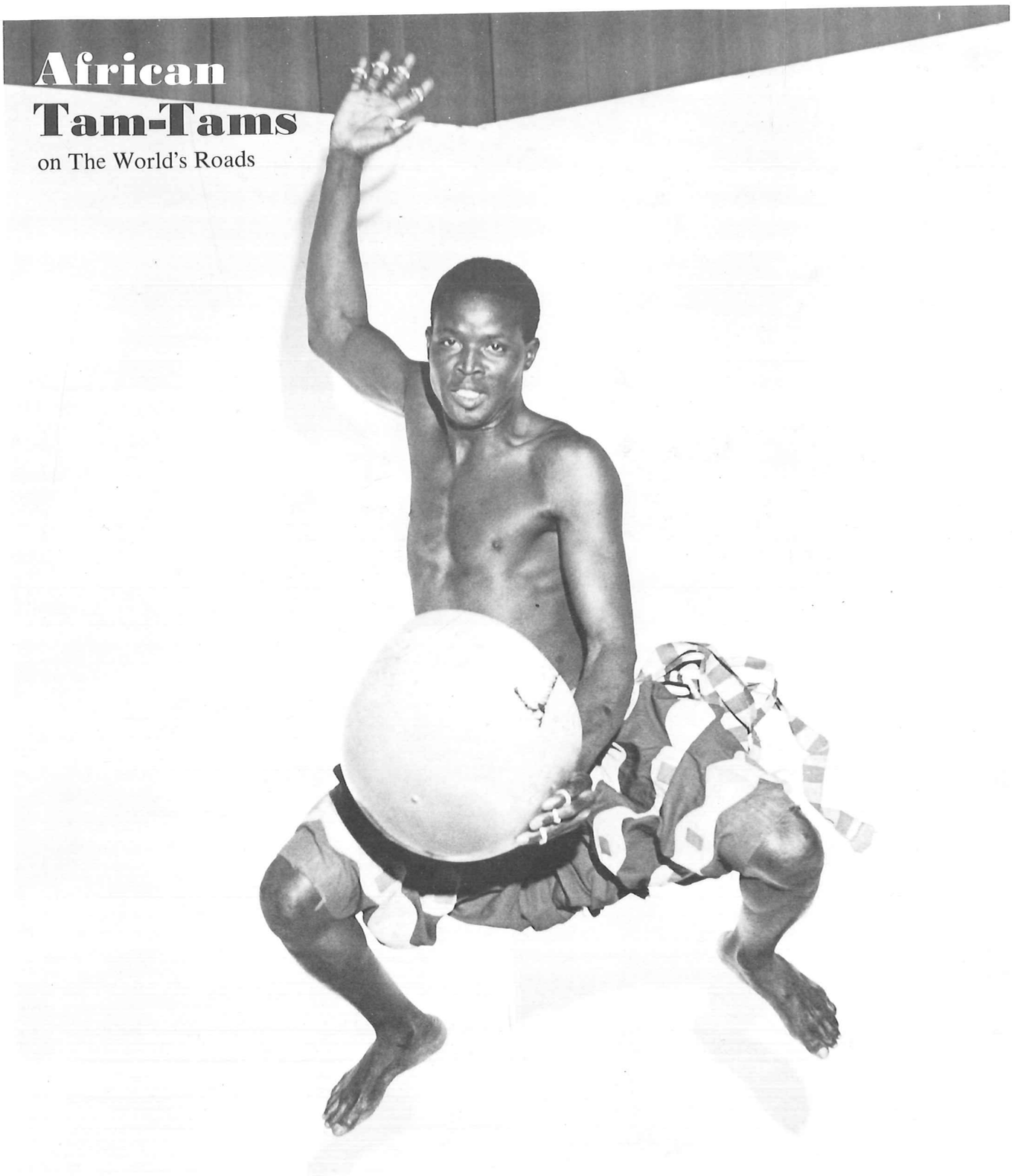
In 1972 the Afro-Asian Festival changed its name to Festival of the Third World as part of a long-term plan to present to North America outstanding Companies from all continents. The troupes presented in 1972 and 1973 were the Dancers and Musicians of Bali, the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey, The Darpana Dance Company of

India, and by popular demand The National Dance Company of Sénégal. Indeed the Senegalese Company was so successful during their 1971 visit that they were invited back by most of the same theatres that had presented them at that time. In addition twenty new cities were added to their itinerary.

The Company's tour of the United States will be followed by a seventeen-week tour of South America, and followed thereafter by a tour of Eastern Europe. Whether the universal success of the National Dance Company of Sénégal can be attributed to the Company's incredible energy, to the joy they radiate, to the richness of their folklore, to their beautiful performers or to their superbly balanced dance program, theirs is a great and living success story—one of which the Senegalese people should certainly be proud.

African Tam-Tams

on The World's Roads



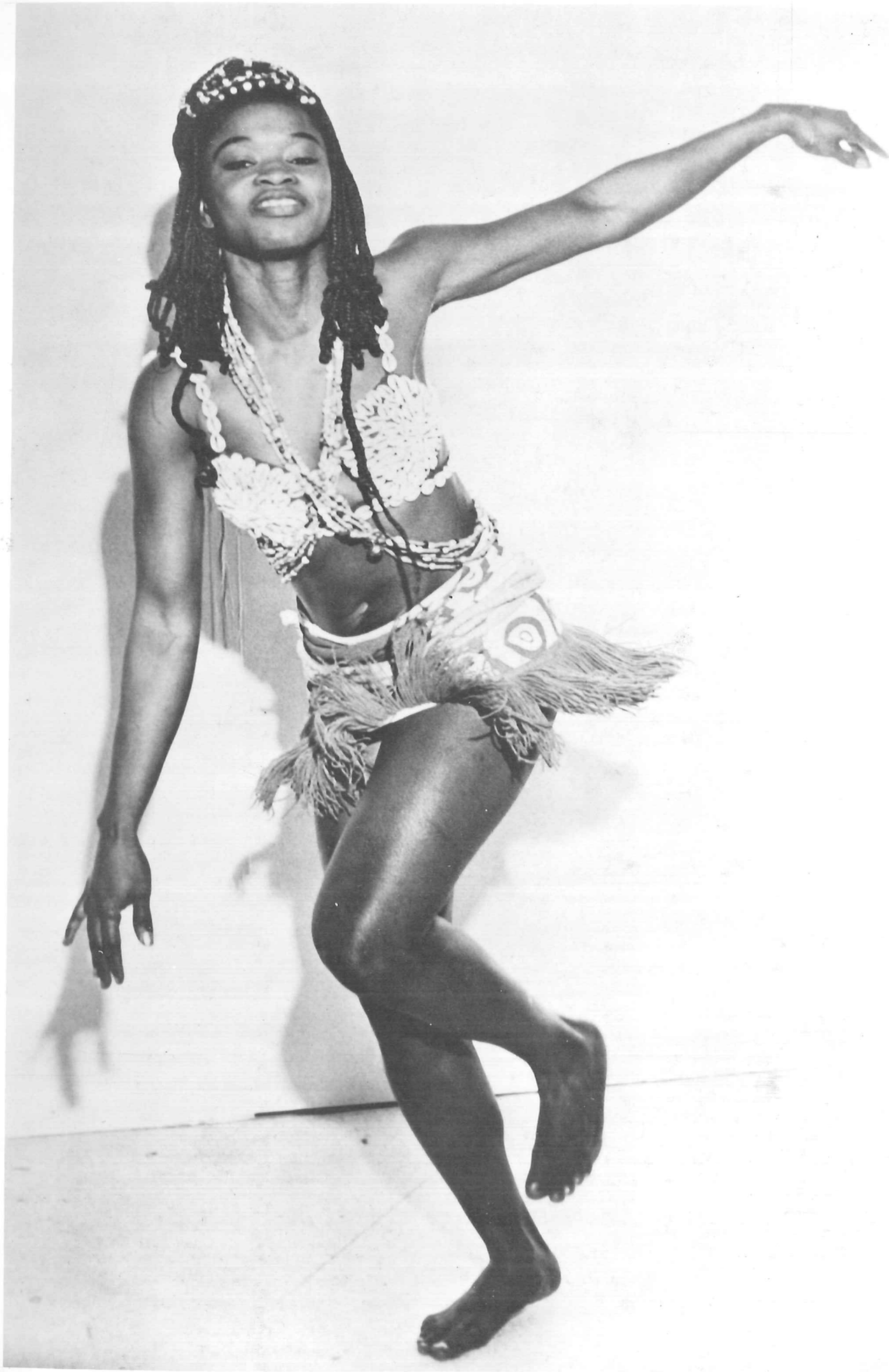
by Maurice Sonar Senghor

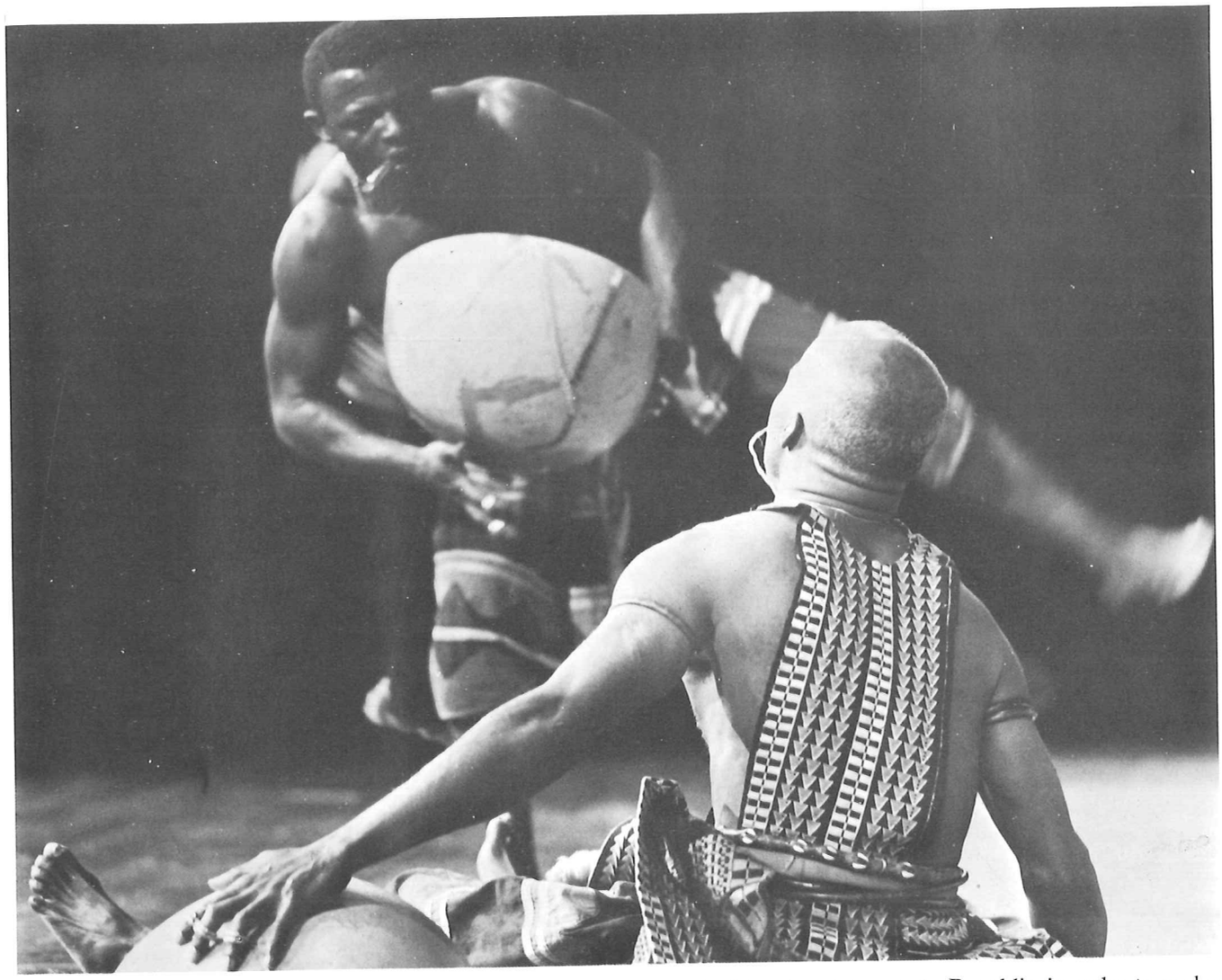
Director of the Theatre National Daniel Sorano

This year will be the thirteenth since the artists of Sénégal began their long march along the world's roads, on the rhythms of the tam-tams of Africa. Thirteen years of constant research, continuing efforts, difficulties, but above all great joys.

It was in March, 1960 that I had the honor of taking for the first time, to the Theatre of Nations in Paris a troupe composed of artists from the ex-French Sudan and from Sénégal. The public received the Company with enthusiasm and our success on the stage of the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre was uncontestable, an important encouragement for a young Company, at the time only four months old.

Looking for the reasons why the Company received such an enthusiastic reception, it seemed that although the artists at the time didn't have great technical control they made up for it with an undeniable freshness, a profound and natural artistic sense and a very real presence on stage —all elements to which audiences are sensitive.





In September of the same year, I decided to add additional elements to the new troupe in order to form a National Dance Company of Sénégal. In this effort I was greatly encouraged by Gerard Sayaret, a friend of some 15 years. His professionalism and intelligence both artistically, and in helping to establish the Company's continuously high morale were a major factor in determining the international career of The National Dance Company of Sénégal.

The Company began its first international tour in March of 1961. Thirty-five singers, dancers, musicians and acrobats participated, including the country's greatest talents: Fatou Diame, Fatou Thiam Samb, Abdou Mama Diouf, Italo Zambo, Doudou N'Diaye Rose, Abdoulaye Camara, and Dougoufana Traore.

Today we know the results of daily hard work, of rigorous discipline and of great homogeniety. In the last 13 years the National Dance Company of Sénégal has performed abroad for eighty-five months (about seven years) travelling over more than 1,500,000 kilometers. It has given some 2000 performances before more than 2,500,000 spectators on the most famous stages in Germany, England, Belgium, France, Canada, the U.S.A., Mexico, Latin America, the U.S.S.R., Scandinavia, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Turkey, Israel, and in several countries of Black Africa.

At the beginning of the Company's sixth international tour, the First Spectator of the Republic, in order to underline the esteem in which he held the Company, said the following to the artists:

"You have succeeded in the role of spokesman for African culture and in particular for Senegalese culture. Your documents are composed of gestures, of songs and of melodies transmitted by the memory of centuries of tradition. You have been able to present the true face of Sénégal and of Black Africa.

In today's violent world where there is such temptation to efface one's own cultural heritage after coming into contact with industrialized civilizations, it is to the honor of your Company that you have so well understood the fundamental goals of the founders of this theatre.

The success that you have enjoyed is due, certainly to the beauty of a rich and sensitive folk-lore, but you have added your talent to this and you have given it a soul. You have been able to impermeate yourselves so fully with the essence of our traditional values that they remain alive despite the metamorphoses of their forms. You have also understood the necessity of feeling the living earth under your feet while on stage, of breathing with the trees through the sets and the walls of theatres, so that your gestures are nourished by the warmth of your land and your voices by the souls of your ancestors.

However, the curtain has only just risen on your new

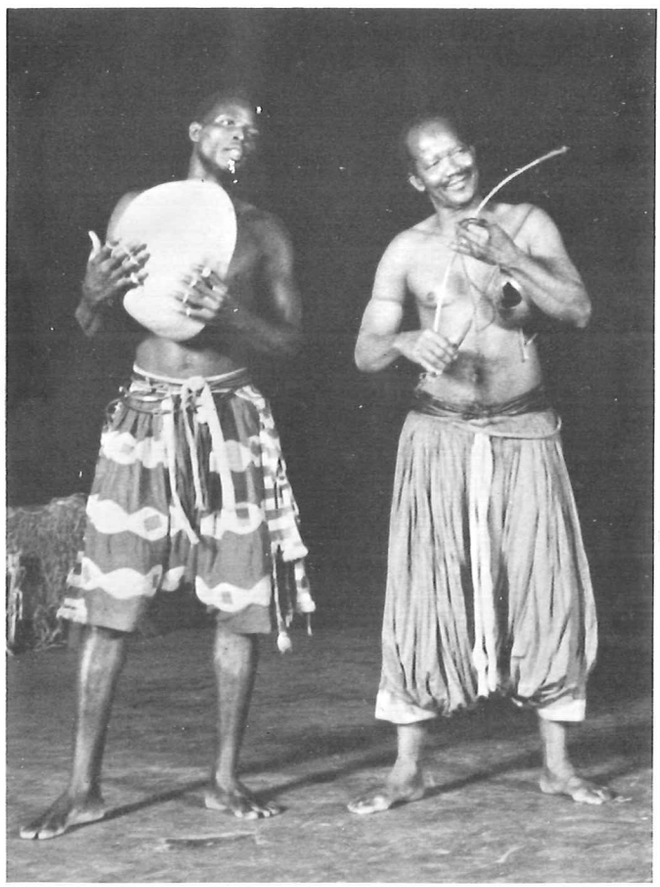
Company. It is with discipline, the key to any technique, and with your own harmony that you will find the true key and become one with our African personality.

It is because you have understood and fulfilled your roles that you, Artists of Sénégal, have been able to deliver the message you are carrying to the world.

That message has been heard and understood by more than 1,500,000 spectators as witnessed by this extract of a text by Louis Sertillieres:

"This troupe is the most beautiful diplomatic representative that the Senegalese Government could possibly have had. It carries with it arguments more subtle, more nuanced, more sensible and much more convincing than any group of experts could have. We don't need any graphs or scientific statements to prove now that Sénégal is a young and dynamic nation worthy of our attention. The National Dance Company of Sénégal has explained it to us in an eternal language which will live as long as there are still men of good will—that is to say with the language of the heart."

With this new tour another page opens on our quest for better understanding between peoples, in the hope that it might help to bring to the people of this planet a little more peace and a little more love.



The Program

Introduction to Rhythm

For the layman, *tam-tam* is a single rhythm. However, in Senegal every *"peule"* and every region has rhythms of its own. To introduce you to these numerous and subtle variations of *tam-tam,* here are *Diakhanke, Soce, Wolof, Diola* and the traditional instruments of Senegal.

Seno

In Toubacouta, a manding village in the "Serese" section of West Africa the villagers work in collective fields.

Musical Interlude with the Cora

The *Cora* is a Senegalese instrument with twenty-one strings.

Yaradal

A dance of fertility. A young woman consults the wise-man of the village who has the power to make her union fruitful.

Musical Interlude with the Balafon

The *Balafon* is a traditional instrument from east Senegal. It has twenty-one wooden keys and sounds somewhat similar to a piano.

Diankey Wali

Ballet by Maurice Sonar Senghor, assisted in the direction by Mamadou M'Baye, according to a true story told by Abdoulaye Camara.

The rains of the winter season have been particularly abundant. Throughout the Country, a good year is anticipated.

The villagers gather in the square to give thanks to the heavens. They rejoice, they congratulate each other, they dance. It's a festive time.

Kiminntan, the rich merchant notices Niara among the young girls. He is attracted to her and tries to get her to notice him.

Niara pretends to ignore him but he seeks her out to dance with her. Later he succeeds in persuading her parents to give him her hand in marriage. But first they must break the engagement of Niara with Bakari, the fisherman.

Bakari, furious, goes to invoke the God Diolas, and to demand vengeance for the outrage that Kiminntan has subjected him to. The marriage takes place some weeks later but when Niara attends her postponed marriage ceremony she is struck by fate.

Kiminntan has become demented. The villagers are going to try to save him by a ceremony of exorcism.

Scene 1.
The Village Festival—Kiminntan sees Niara for the first time.

Scene 2.
Bakari invokes the God Diolas and demands vengeance for the outrage to which he has been subjected.

Scene 3.
Niara's friends help her prepare for her marriage to Kiminntan. An exorcism ceremony.

INTERMISSION

Bouga Rabou

A Tam-Tam, Diola prelude to the harvest festivities.

Koumpo

Formerly, before the drought raged on the countries of the Sahel, the end of winter—rainy season—was the occasion for the villagers to celebrate the abundance of the harvest. This was represented by a human haystack who, turning to the rhythm of the *tam-tam,* amazed even the most guarded of spectators. Here in a manding village of Niombato, the harvest festival is replayed.

The Acrobatic "Peulhs"

The *Foulas* of Oriental Senegal live as nomads. They leave the foothills of Fouta Djalon and shine in all the regions of Senegal. They are excellent acrobats.

Musical Interlude

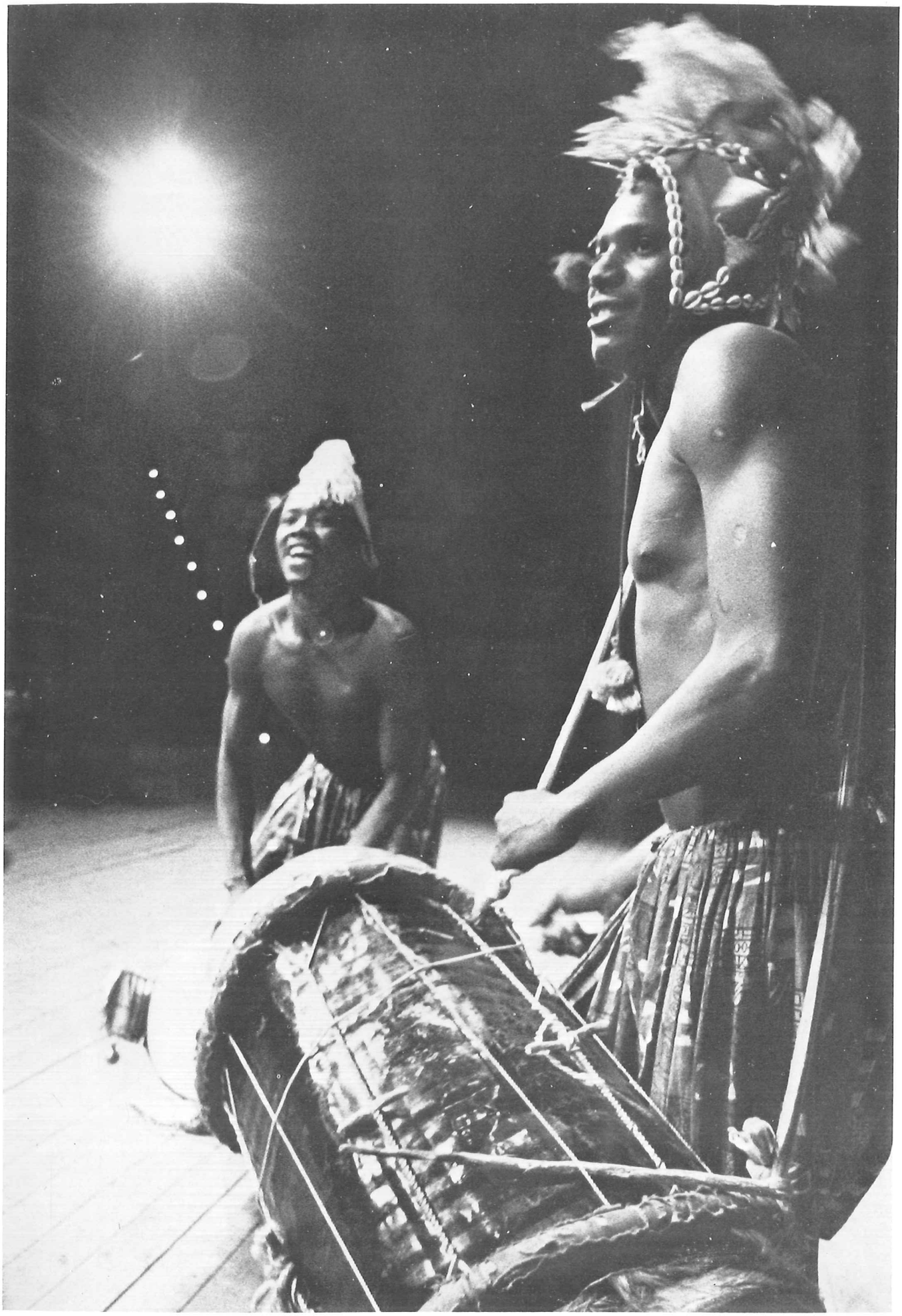
Korela

N'Deye Coumba, tam-tam virtuoso, leads the number. The echo of the *djimbe* has transmitted his message. Villagers are coming from Fouta, Kedougou, and Tambacounda. Dances of joy and ritual dances succeed each other.

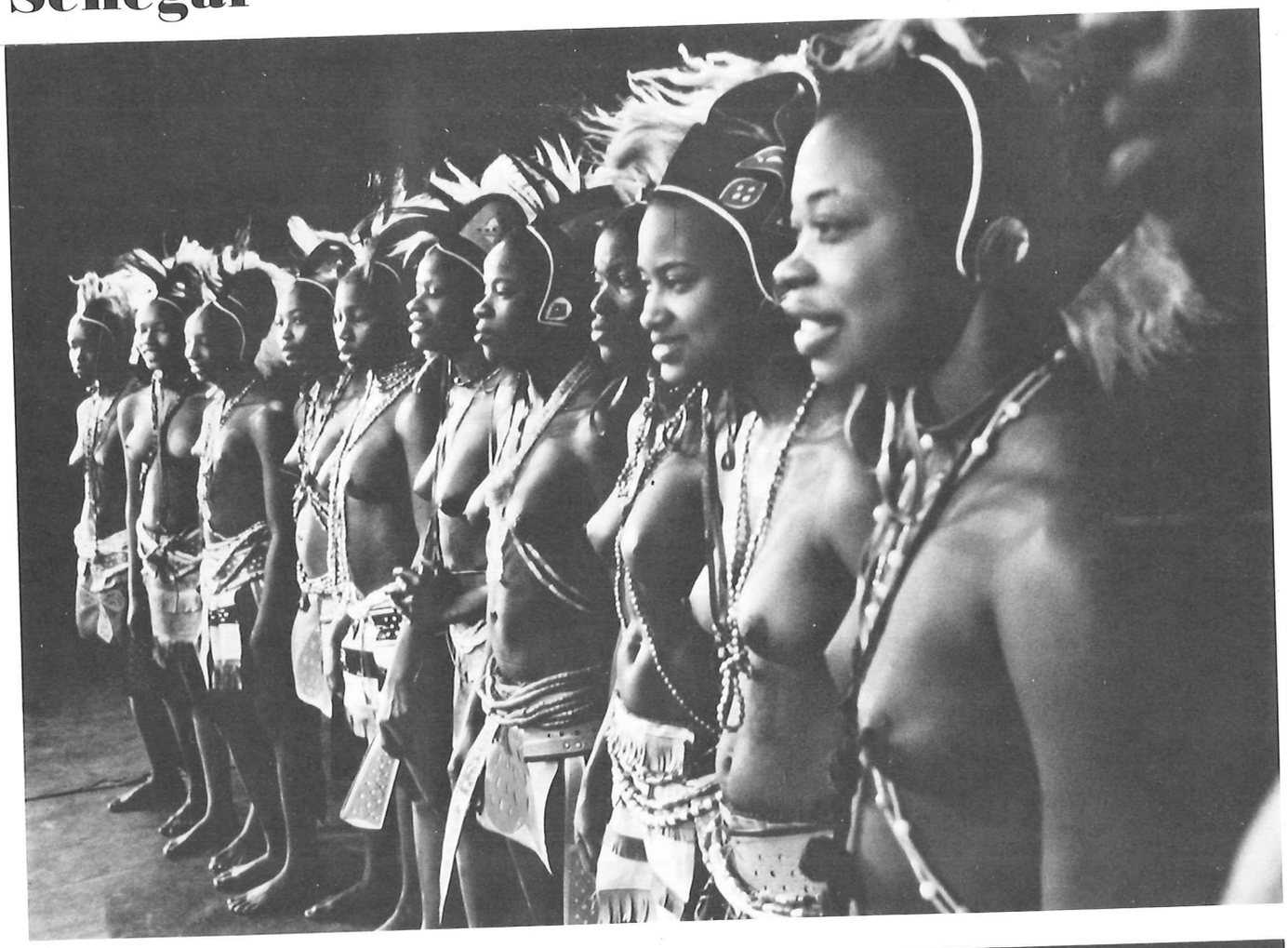
Finale

The dancers trace a rapid fresco of traditional Senegalese dance steps. The Cora and Balafon send a last friendly message. Then, for a last time the tam-tams play their different rhythms, and disappear, with the hope that you'll long keep the echoes of Senegal in your heart.

Program is subject to change without notice.



Sénégal



Sénégal is situated at the western-most tip of West Africa and extends over a period of 200,000 square kilometers. The country is on a great plain that rarely reaches an altitude of more than 100 meters. The principal points of relief are *les collines des Mamelles* (Breast Hills; 105 meters); the plateau de Thiés (128 meters), and, to the south-east, the hills of Kedougou, (500 meters).

The coast is 500 kilometers long and sandy from Saint-Louis to the Cap-Vert Peninsula. The land is sandy again from Dakar to the end of Sagomar, then swampy until Cap Roxo.

The climate of Sénégal is very varied. The principal types of climates are the *Sahélien,* in the north, hot, dry and extremely windy nearly all year long. The climate on the coast is cooler and more humid and the climate in low Casamance is hot and very rainy.

The availability of water in Sénégal depends on the climate. In the southern rainy area it is always available, while in the north, during the dry seasons, the land terraces. The major rivers are the Sénégal (1,700 kilometers); the Sine; the Gambie and the Casamance. The lakes Tanma and Retba are the most important in the land.

Sénégal has a population of 3,370,000 with both extremes—that of density and scarcity of population. The most populated region is that of Cap Vert with a population density of 800 people per square km. The major part

of the Senegalese population is composed of farmers. The principal ethnic groups are the Ouoloffs, the Sérères, the Toucouleurs, the Peulhs, the Diolas, and the Mandingues. The principal cities are Dakar, Kaolack, Rufisque, Thiès, Saint-Louis, Ziguinchor, Diourbel, Louga and Tambacounda.

Sénégal's natural resources include the forest, which supplies wood, food and rubber, and from underground, phosphates. The sea and rivers are abundant in fish and supply most of the food for the population.

Sénégal is one of the biggest producers of peanuts in the world with an annual production of close to 1,000,000 tons. Other major crops include tobacco, sugar-cane and cotton.

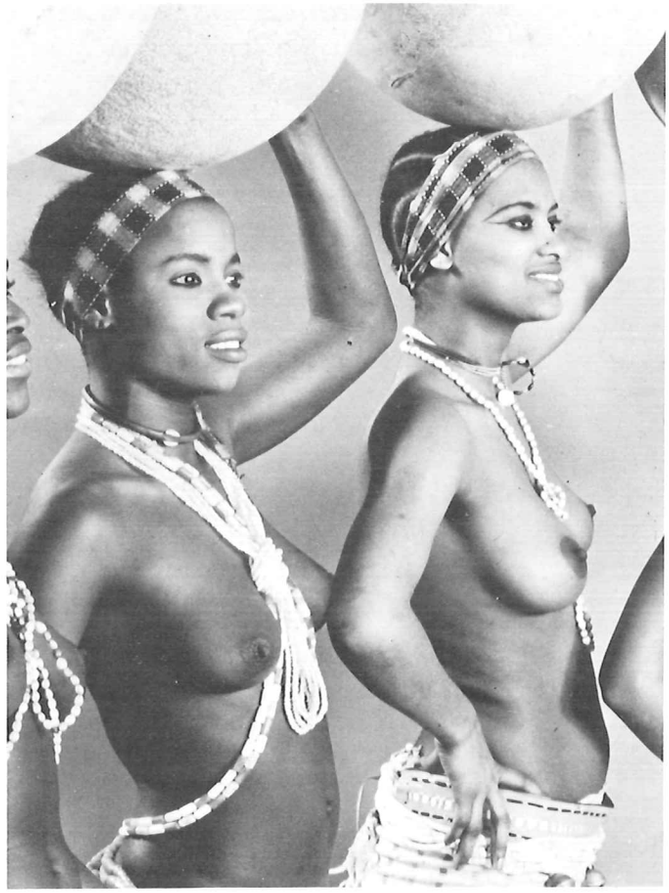
Vegetables are grown mostly in the land surrounding Dakar.

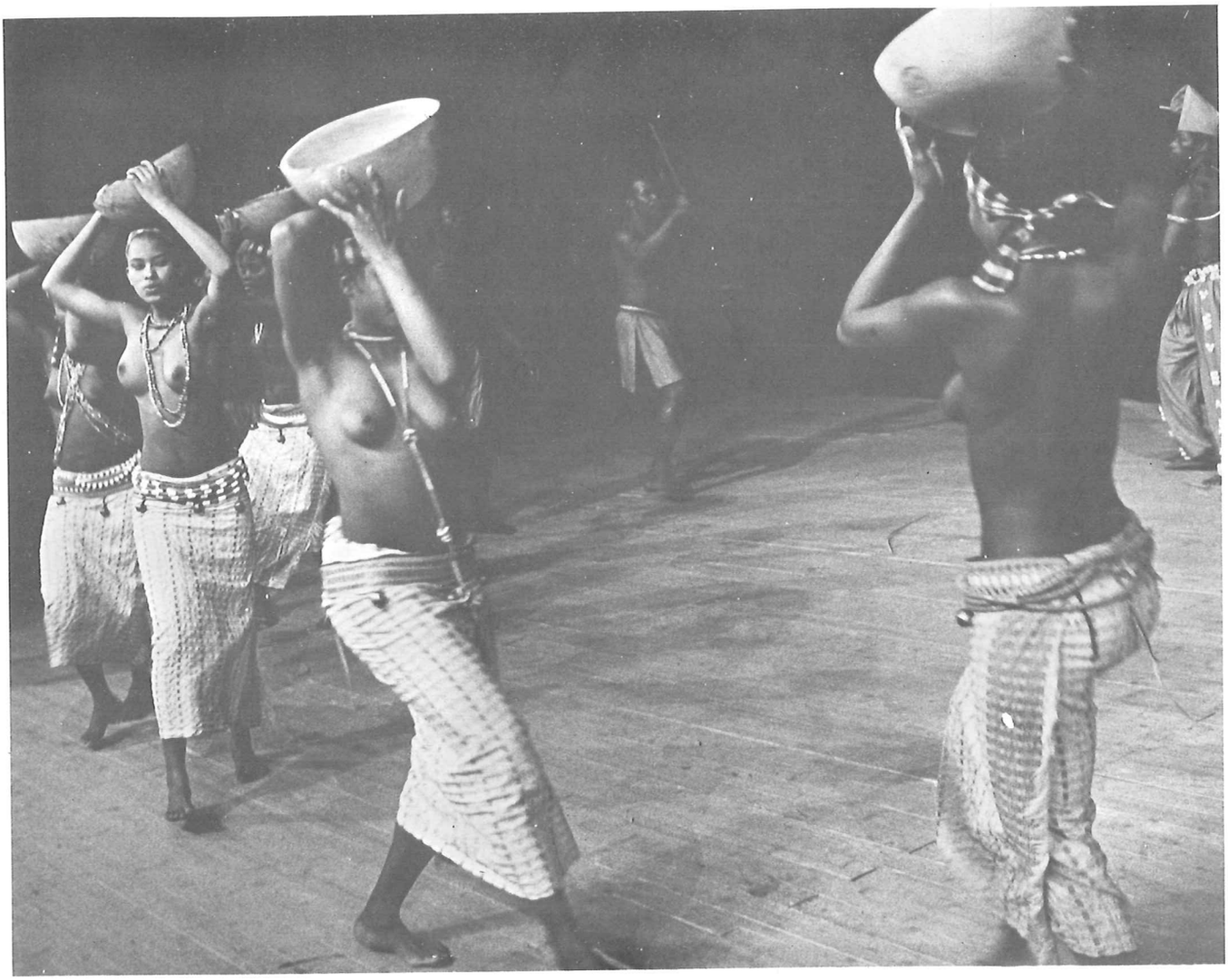
Sénégal also produces in ever-increasing, but in still insufficient quantities, millet, rice, potatoes and cassava.

Animal breeding is hardly developed in Sénégal, however, the country does have over 2,000,000 cows, 1,300,000 sheep and goats and quantities of horses, camels and pigs.

The Government is trying to increase stock-breeding, and chicken-breeding is rapidly developing in the areas surrounding the population centers.

The principal artisans in Sénégal are the weavers, shoemakers, jewelers and carpenters. Senegalese industry is





concentrated in the regions of Cap-Vert. The most important industry deals with peanuts and its by-products but there are also food-producing, chemical, textile and metallurgical industries in the country.

The country is crossed with 13,500 kilometers of roads, 1,190 kilometers of railroad track, several airports and several very busy harbors. Dakar has the best and busiest harbor and airport of the whole west African coast. They connect by sea and air, Europe, America, and the whole African continent.

Trade is very important in Sénégal and many goods are exchanged between Dakar and the rest of the country. Sénégal exports peanuts, phosphates and canned fish. It imports machines, cars and mineral oils.

The region of Thiès, which includes M'Bour and Tivavouane provinces, is approximately 6,600 square kilometers with a population of 410,000 inhabitants. It produces peanuts and vegetables. M'Bour is a fishing harbor; Joal produces oysters. The entire phosphate production in Sénégal comes from the region of Thiès. It is an important crossroads city.

The region of Diourbel is about 33,500 square kilometers with 500,000 inhabitants. It's a rich region of breeding and peanut growing. Farming is on the increase in the Sine Valley. There are more roads and railways in this region than in any other.

The region of the Fleuve is 44,000 square kilometers with 345,000 inhabitants. Rice, millet, cotton and sugar-cane are cultivated. It's the most important region for breeding in Sénégal. The principal routes of communication are the Sénégal River and the Dieri Road, from Saint-Louis to Bake. The important airports are Saint-Louis, Podor and Matam.

The region of Casamance in southern Sénégal has 530,000 inhabitants. It's a very important region for the Senegalese economy. Here agriculture and crop breeding prosper, fishing is excellent and new roads between Casamance and the rest of the country have opened the possibility for important trade.

Dakar is a city of 500,000 inhabitants. The city, not quite 100 years old, is the administrative and commercial capital of Sénégal, with the busiest harbor and airport of the whole west-African coast.

Sénégal is a stopping-off point for the world's ships and airlines. It trades with many countries on many continents. Dakar is the intellectual capital of west Africa with its university of 2,300 students. Once a French colony, Sénégal achieved its independence on April 4, 1960. It belongs to numerous international associations and was an important contributor to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OUA).

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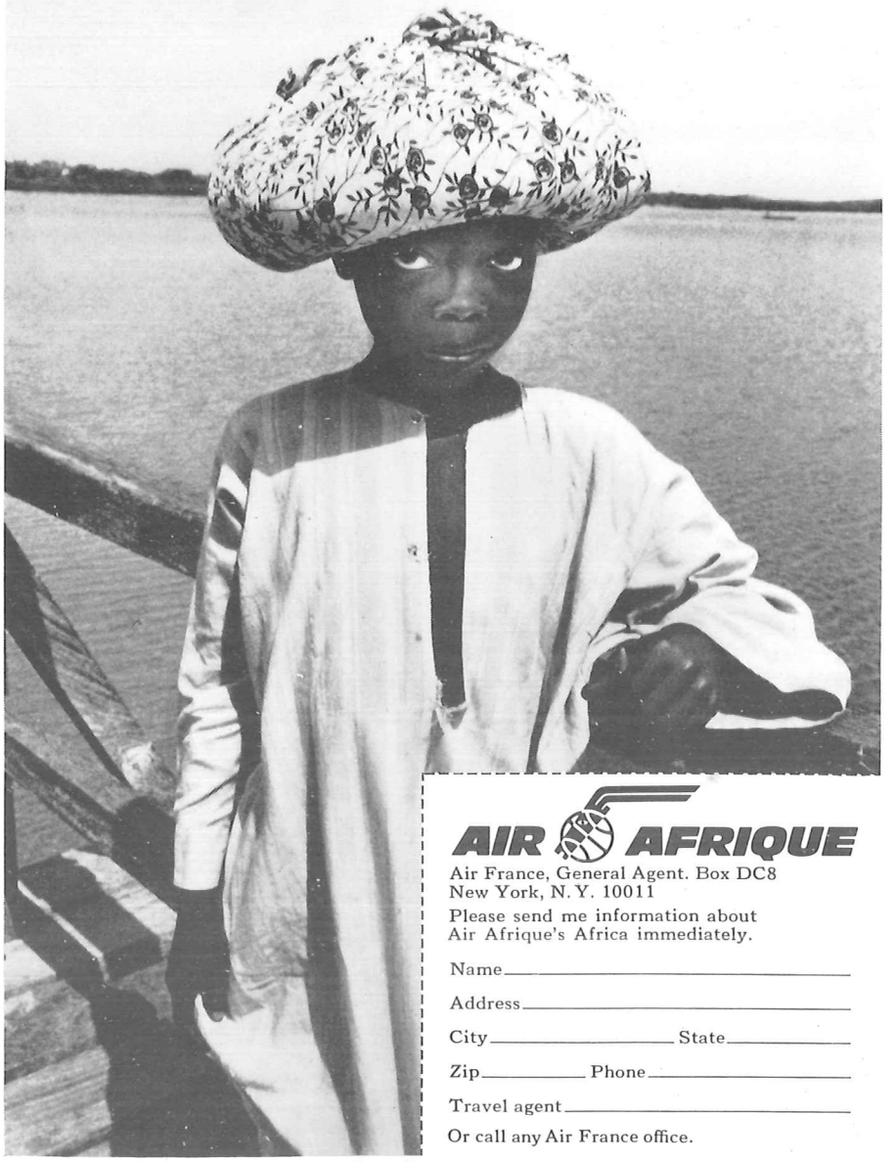

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